

CITY OF IDAHO FALLS
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
P.O. BOX 50220
IDAHO FALLS ID 83405-0220
(208) 612-8276

July 14, 2011
12:15 p.m.

City Annex Building, Council Chambers
680 Park Avenue

Members Present: Stephanie Austad; Alex Creek; Jake Cordova; Hal Latin; Len Stenzel; and James Wyatt.

Members Absent: Steve Davies; Richard Lee; and Kendall Phillips.

Staff Present: Brad Cramer, assistant director; and Debra Petty, recording secretary.

Also Present: The applicant(s) and three interested citizens.

Changes to Agenda: Business items 1 and 2 are withdrawn from the agenda.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 12:15 p.m. by Chair Wyatt.

Minutes: June 23, 2011.

Motion by Cordova, seconded by Creek, to approve the minutes of June 23, 2011, as presented.

Aye: Stephanie Austad; Alex Creek; Jake Cordova; Hal Latin; Len Stenzel; and James Wyatt.

Nay:

Abstain:

Public Hearings:

**Variance Request
Portion of Westfield Plaza, Division 1, 2, &3
1705 W. Broadway**

Cramer described the request as outlined in the staff report, a part of the public record. He noted the following in regard to the project:

- Since advertising, the proposed square feet for the sign was reduced by 96 square feet.
- The request is for approval of a variance to allow an existing sign to be increased from 144 square feet to 368 square feet and 37 feet in height.
- Sign code was modified in 2002 to allow one sign per shopping centers per street frontage.
- A variance was granted in 2004 for a second sign at the location of the preexisting McDonald's sign because the existing sign for the shopping center allowed advertising of Albertson's and Rite Aid only.
- United States Sign Council uses a formula based on speed, number of travel lanes, and roadway complexity to determine minimum sign size for motorist safety.
- According to calculations, each tenant space should be 72 square feet versus the current 24 square feet.
- The proposed tenant spaces of 24 square feet may be less than adequate, but any increase would increase the height of the sign.
- Staff prefers approval of the electronic message center rather than a larger sign.
- The smaller tenants are located 220 feet from Broadway and many of the wall signs are not readable.
- Albertson's sign is heavily controlled by a lease agreement and eliminates inclusion of smaller tenants.
- The sign is an upgrade to the property and reflects the architecture of the building.
- Staff recommends approval of the variance request as presented.

Cramer confirmed the total square feet of both signs; Albertson's and the proposed sign, is less than what is allowed for one sign for a shopping center. He told Stenzel the message

center is not for animation and must meet specific requirements for timing, brightness, etc. This is part of the sign application permit process. There is no option for animation, as the city amended the ordinance disallowing them.

Chair Wyatt opened the hearing to public comment.

David Collette
5635 South 9th Street
Idaho Falls, ID 83404

Mr. Collette said he and his partners recently purchased Westfield Plaza. Originally, only the anchor tenants were allowed identification on the main plaza sign. Albertson's has control of the existing sign and is unwilling to work with the new owners to allow representation of all tenants. The original owner was granted a variance in 2004 to accommodate advertising of 10 tenants and was still very inadequate.

The partnership is working to modernize and improve the appearance of the shopping center in hopes of drawing more retail to the west side of town. The west end of the shopping center was renovated and the entire center painted. As finances allow, plans are to continue improvements along the front façade, sidewalks, wider entries, and install much needed landscaping.

Approval of the variance for increased signage would go a long way in drawing other merchants to this end of town. It is unfortunate that Albertson's is unwilling to cooperate regarding signage as more traffic would be an increase in business for them too.

Mr. Collette is having the sign engineered for anchoring. He knows it will require additional footings. The electronic message center would be beneficial for advertising specials and public announcements. When questioned by Wyatt about the long-term lease with Albertson's, he said they own the building, but the existing lease is for another 30 years.

Chair Wyatt closed the hearing to public comment.

Discussion by the board: Austad said she is in favor of granting the variance. Wyatt noted the situation is unique as the new owners assumed a lengthy lease allowing Albertson's control of the main plaza sign. Cordova said the proposed sign face and existing Albertson's sign is less than what is allow by code for a single plaza sign.

Motion by Austad, seconded by Cordova, to approve the request for a variance to upgrade the existing sign to include an electronic message center and increase the sign face from 144 square feet to 338 square feet as advertised. Stenzel asked the motion be amended to approve as presented. Austad amended the motion to approve as presented because it is not a negative impact to the neighborhood and necessary in order to adequately identify premises for the reasons noted in discussion.

Aye: Stephanie Austad; Alex Creek; Jake Cordova; Hal Latin; Len Stenzel; and James Wyatt.

Nay:

Abstain:

Miscellaneous:

Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Debra Petty, Recording Secretary
Board of Adjustment